

# Beechdale Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113985
<b>Local Authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	338270
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 January 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Lesley Clark

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	59
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr A Watson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs A Bell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Beechdale Road Consett County Durham DH8 6AY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01207 505752
<b>Fax number</b>	0
<b>Email address</b>	beechdale@durhamlearning.net

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited six lessons and spent 80% of inspection time looking at learning. All the Nursery staff were observed at work with the children in child-led and adult-led activities outside and indoors. The inspectors held meetings with governors and staff and spoke with parents and children. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including documentation and policies relating to safeguarding, the school's assessments of children's learning, children's learning journals, the school improvement plan and 44 completed parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how assessment is used to ensure that children's unique needs are met
- the reasons why it is likely that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make extremely good progress
- whether safeguarding systems are as good as the school believes them to be
- to what extent outdoor learning and child-led activities contribute to children's progress.

## Information about the school

This extremely popular small Nursery school gives part-time education to 78 children in Consett and the surrounding area. It has a large waiting list. The school offers breakfast and lunchtime clubs which extend the Nursery provision. The school is an outreach centre for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The outreach centre supports children in school and in other settings. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and with a statement of special educational need is much higher than usual. Most children are White British. A tiny proportion learn English as an additional language, with Polish and German being the languages spoken at home. The school holds the Basic Skills and School Success Awards. The headteacher received an OBE in the recent Honours List for services to education.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

Beechdale Nursery gives children an outstanding start to their education. It provides exceptionally well for children's unique needs and so children thrive. They quickly become happy and purposeful learners who clearly enjoy every moment in Nursery. Attendance is high and behaviour is exemplary. A major strength is the way in which Nursery staff use daily observations of children's learning to set up activities which interest and challenge all children to make the next steps in their development. This is why children of all abilities make exceptionally good progress and mostly attain well above expected levels for their age by the time they leave. 'Learning journals' provide parents with a vivid and accurate record of their child's learning and development. They tell parents the next steps in their child's learning but do not always say when the child has achieved these steps. Often this is because children's learning has moved on so quickly. Provision is outstanding. The consistent team approach of staff ensures that every moment is valuable to children's learning. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make excellent progress because staff track their small steps of learning meticulously and do not underestimate their capabilities. The outreach centre plays a significant part in aiding these children's learning and development. Outdoor learning and child-led activities are major factors in children's successful learning and development. They promote children's independence and self-reliance exceptionally well.

The school takes outstanding care of all children. It has an excellent grasp of all aspects of safety and child protection. Self-evaluation is accurate and rigorous. The leadership team keeps a close check on the school's work in order to ensure a continuous cycle of improvement. Since the last inspection, the school has gone from strength to strength, improving upon its outstanding track record. Provision for more-able and talented children has improved and children have far more opportunities to write. The school is fully aware of its strengths but continues to be ambitious and self-critical, as demonstrated by its widening community links to include Eastern Europe and other countries. This illustrates very well the excellent capacity that the school has to improve further.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that 'learning journals' tell parents when their child has achieved the next steps in their learning so everyone is up to date with the next target for development.

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## Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

**1**

Children arrive promptly and eager to learn. They greet their key people and friends affectionately and instantly busy themselves with different tasks. They make outstanding progress in a short time. From well below average starting points, with limited speech, communication and social skills, children turn into confident, chatty, self-sufficient young people who help others. They become increasingly articulate because staff spend a lot of time talking to children and introducing them to new words in the most natural way. This also helps those learning English as an additional language. For example, children cheerfully joined in an adult's improvised song: 'Crunch, crunch through the snow!' By the end of their time in Nursery, children's attainment is well above expectations in all areas of learning. The most-able children are beginning to read and write. Average achievers understand that letters and sounds are linked and know the names of several two and three-dimensional shapes. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make excellent progress and almost all of this group attain at least the level expected at the end of the Nursery year. Children have excellent social and moral awareness, accept and respect other children's needs and differences, and show a daily delight and wonder at new experiences.

Children freely access a wide range of thought-provoking activities indoors and outside. They behave very sensibly and have an excellent awareness of safety without being fearful. They know that fruit and vegetables are healthy and plan the weekly breakfast menus and shop for the ingredients. They decide on what their Nursery needs. When they decided they wanted pets, they researched which ones were appropriate and held a ballot to decide their names. They take responsibility for themselves and point out to newcomers that they have to do things for themselves and not wait to be helped. Their self-reliance and belief that they can do anything, together with their advanced literacy, numeracy and computer skills provide them with essential life skills for the future.

*These are the grades for children's outcomes*

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Children's attainment <sup>1</sup>	1
The quality of children's learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

<b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b> Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
<b>The extent to which children feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Children's behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b> Taking into account: Children's attendance <sup>1</sup>	<b>1</b>
	1
<b>The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Outstanding provision provides extensive child-led sessions alongside short adult-led sessions with small groups of different abilities. All staff follow a similar routine and so children know what to expect. This increases their confidence and enjoyment. Additional provision for more-able and talented children successfully pushes their learning on. The key person system works exceptionally well for, while staff give special support to their groups, they also know when to step back so that children do not become over-dependent. This is a key factor in the excellent progress that children with special educational needs and/or difficulties make.

Adults encourage children to join in story telling and to voice their opinions. Often high quality discussions evolve because of staff's excellent questioning which challenges children to think deeply. Staff are skilled at giving children time to express their views and also feeding them new vocabulary. As a result, children become skilled at answering questions such as 'How do you know?' and 'Why?' The use of assessment to support learning is first rate. All learning activities are based on the next steps in children's learning which staff identify each week. Children's interests are taken fully into account and so their views help shape the curriculum. Staff have begun to share the next steps in children's learning with parents, but do not always point out when children have met these and moved on to the next stage. This is not the case with the 'learning journals' of children with special educational needs and/or difficulties. These are absolutely meticulous and chart each small development extremely closely and so parents have a very clear sense of their children's step-by-step progress from one observation to the next.

The outreach centre offers outstanding quality support for individual learners, including fundraising to acquire specialist equipment to help children and their families cope with significant special educational needs and/or disabilities.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
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<b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b> Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
<b>The quality of teaching</b> Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	<b>1</b>  1
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Team work is the key to outstanding leadership and management in this school. The senior leaders lead by example. High expectations and simple systems, involving all staff, ensure remarkable consistency leading to high quality learning. The school is used as a model of exemplary practice in the local authority. The school benefits from extended partnerships through the senior leaders' advisory work in other schools and as an outreach centre in the community. This keeps the school at the forefront of excellent practice. Staff training is excellent and plays a major part in the school's outstanding provision as staff, as well as leaders, bring in new ideas for improvement.

The school has high quality safeguarding practices which fully meet current government safeguarding requirements. Procedures are thorough and fully implemented by staff. Governors have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and discharge their safeguarding responsibilities extremely well. They know the school well and strike an excellent balance between close involvement and detached advice. The school's actions have a markedly beneficial effect on community cohesion, both within its local community and beyond.

Partnership with parents is excellent and parents commented that they are 'always well informed' personally, through a notice board outlining activities and learning for the week and through the television showing previous learning.' The outcomes for all children are extremely positive because the school's focus is firmly on providing equal opportunities for all and not tolerating harassment of any kind.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b> Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	<b>1</b>  1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>

<p><b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b>                  Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms</p>	
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	1
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	1
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	1

## Views of parents and carers

Virtually all parents think the Nursery is excellent and many wrote to say so. They especially like the way the staff know their children as individuals. The inspection team agree.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Beechdale Nursery School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 44 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 59 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	86	6	14	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	40	91	4	9	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	37	84	7	16	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	38	86	6	14	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	37	84	7	16	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	37	84	7	16	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	80	7	16	1	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	31	70	10	23	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	84	7	16	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	77	8	18	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	77	9	20	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	39	89	5	11	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	39	89	5	11	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its children's needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its children well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its children.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its children. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a child in their learning and development.
Attainment:	in other phases of school, for example primary schools, attainment is the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. However, there is no national average for three- and four-year-olds. Therefore, in inspections of nursery schools, inspectors take account of expectations in the age-related bands of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well children acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of children.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which children are learning in nursery sessions and over longer periods of time.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



14 January 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Beechdale Nursery School, Consett, DH8 6AY

I really enjoyed meeting so many of you and watching you play. I loved your spray painted snowmen and thought you were very grown up when you sledged and poured each other drinks!

You go to an outstanding Nursery. This means that you learn a great deal in a very short time. Everyone in the Nursery helps you. You learn lots of new things and are very good at helping each other. The way you talk and discuss things is very grown up. I like the way you decide what you want to do and the way adults help you and teach you so many new words.

Your parents and carers think your Nursery is excellent too. They like your 'learning journals' and I am sure you like looking at the photographs and recalling all you have been doing. The Nursery staff tell your parents what they think you should do next – sometimes you do this so quickly they forget to tell your parents that you've done that and have moved on to the next thing! So I have suggested they make sure they tell your parents this. I do hope you continue to enjoy Nursery and that you grow up to like reading stories and writing as much as you do now.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Lesley Clark

Lead Inspector

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